

110TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 3627

To promote the deployment and adoption of telecommunications services and information technologies, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 20, 2007

Mr. SPACE (for himself, Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas, and Mr. ARCURI) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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## A BILL

To promote the deployment and adoption of telecommunications services and information technologies, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Connect The Nation  
5       Act”.

6       **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7       Congress finds the following:

8               (1) The deployment and adoption of broadband  
9       service and information technology has resulted in

1 enhanced economic development and public safety  
2 for communities across the Nation, improved health  
3 care and educational opportunities, and a better  
4 quality of life for all Americans.

5 (2) Continued progress in the deployment and  
6 adoption of broadband and other advanced informa-  
7 tion services is vital to ensuring that our Nation re-  
8 mains competitive and continues to create business  
9 and job growth.

10 (3) The Federal Government should also recog-  
11 nize and encourage complementary state efforts to  
12 improve the quality and usefulness of broadband  
13 data and should encourage and support the partner-  
14 ship of the public and private sectors in the contin-  
15 ued growth of broadband service and information  
16 technology for the residents and businesses of the  
17 Nation.

18 **SEC. 3. ENCOURAGING STATE INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE**  
19 **BROADBAND.**

20 (a) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this section are—

21 (1) to ensure that all citizens and businesses in  
22 a State have access to affordable and reliable  
23 broadband service;

1           (2) to achieve improved technology literacy, in-  
2           creased computer ownership, and home broadband  
3           use among such citizens and businesses;

4           (3) to establish and empower local grassroots  
5           technology teams in each State to plan for improved  
6           technology use across multiple community sectors;  
7           and

8           (4) to establish and sustain an environment  
9           ripe for broadband service and information tech-  
10          nology investment.

11          (b) ESTABLISHMENT OF STATE BROADBAND DATA  
12          AND DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM.—

13               (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall award  
14               grants, taking into account the results of the peer  
15               review process under subsection (d), to eligible enti-  
16               ties for the development and implementation of  
17               statewide initiatives to identify and track the avail-  
18               ability and adoption of broadband service within  
19               each State.

20               (2) COMPETITIVE BASIS.—Any grant under this  
21               section shall be awarded on a competitive basis.

22               (c) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive a grant  
23               under subsection (b), an eligible entity shall—

1           (1) submit an application to the Secretary, at  
2           such time, in such manner, and containing such in-  
3           formation as the Secretary may require; and

4           (2) agree to contribute matching non-Federal  
5           funds in an amount equal to not less than 20 per-  
6           cent of the total amount of the grant.

7           (d) PEER REVIEW.—

8           (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall by regu-  
9           lation require appropriate technical and scientific  
10          peer review of applications made for grants under  
11          this section.

12          (2) REVIEW PROCEDURES.—The regulations re-  
13          quired under paragraph (1) shall require that any  
14          technical and scientific peer review group—

15                (A) be provided a written description of  
16                the grant to be reviewed;

17                (B) provide the results of any review by  
18                such group to the Secretary; and

19                (C) certify that such group will enter into  
20                voluntary nondisclosure agreements as nec-  
21                essary to prevent the unauthorized disclosure of  
22                confidential and propriety information provided  
23                by broadband service providers in connection  
24                with projects funded by any such grant.

1 (e) USE OF FUNDS.—A grant awarded to an eligible  
2 entity under subsection (b) shall be used—

3 (1) to provide a baseline assessment of  
4 broadband service deployment in each State;

5 (2) to identify and track—

6 (A) areas in each State that have low lev-  
7 els of broadband service deployment;

8 (B) the rate at which residential and busi-  
9 ness customers adopt broadband service and  
10 other related information technology services;  
11 and

12 (C) possible suppliers of such services;

13 (3) to identify barriers to the adoption by indi-  
14 viduals and businesses of broadband service and re-  
15 lated information technology services, including  
16 whether or not—

17 (A) the demand for such services is absent;  
18 and

19 (B) the supply for such services is capable  
20 of meeting the demand for such services;

21 (4) to create and facilitate in each county or  
22 designated region in a State a local technology plan-  
23 ning team—

24 (A) with members representing a cross sec-  
25 tion of the community, including representatives

of business, telecommunications labor organizations, K–12 education, health care, libraries, higher education, community-based organizations, local government, tourism, parks and recreation, and agriculture; and

(B) which shall—

(i) measure technology use across relevant community sectors;

(ii) set goals for improved technology use within each sector; and

(iii) develop a tactical business plan for achieving the local technology planning team’s goals, with specific recommendations for online application development and demand creation;

(5) to work collaboratively with broadband service providers and information technology companies to encourage deployment and use, especially in unserved and underserved areas, through the use of local demand aggregation, mapping analysis, and the creation of market intelligence to improve the business case for providers to deploy;

(6) to establish programs to improve computer ownership and Internet access for unserved and underserved populations;

1           (7) to collect and analyze detailed market data  
2           concerning the use and demand for broadband serv-  
3           ice and related information technology services;

4           (8) to facilitate information exchange regarding  
5           the use and demand for broadband service between  
6           public and private sectors; and

7           (9) to create within each State a geographic in-  
8           ventory map of broadband service, which shall—

9                   (A) identify gaps in such service through a  
10                   method of geographic information system map-  
11                   ping of service availability at the census block  
12                   level; and

13                   (B) provide a baseline assessment of state-  
14                   wide broadband deployment in terms of house-  
15                   holds with high-speed availability.

16       (f) PARTICIPATION LIMIT.—For each State, an eligi-  
17       ble entity may not receive a new grant under this section  
18       to fund the activities described in subsection (e) within  
19       such State if such organization obtained prior grant  
20       awards under this section to fund the same activities in  
21       that State in each of the previous 4 consecutive years.

22       (g) REPORT.—Each recipient of a grant under sub-  
23       section (b) shall submit a report on the use of the funds  
24       provided by the grant to the Secretary not later than 1  
25       year after the funds were received.

1 (h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

2 (1) BROADBAND SERVICE.—The term  
3 “broadband service” means any service that con-  
4 nects to the public Internet that provides a data  
5 transmission-rate equivalent to at least 200 kilobits  
6 per second or any successor transmission-rate estab-  
7 lished by the Federal Communications Commission,  
8 in at least 1 direction.

9 (2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-  
10 ty” means a nonprofit organization—

11 (A) that is selected by a State to work in  
12 partnership with State agencies and private sec-  
13 tor partners in identifying and tracking the  
14 availability and adoption of broadband service  
15 within each State;

16 (B) that has an established competency  
17 and proven record of working with public and  
18 private sectors to accomplish widescale deploy-  
19 ment and adoption of broadband service and in-  
20 formation technology; and

21 (C) the board of directors of which is not  
22 composed of a majority of individuals who are  
23 also employed by, or otherwise associated with,  
24 any Federal, State, or local government or any  
25 Federal, State, or local agency.



1           (3) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION.—The term  
2           “nonprofit organization” means an organization—

3                   (A) described in section 501(c)(3) of the  
4           Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and exempt  
5           from tax under section 501(a) of such Code;  
6           and

7                   (B) no part of the net earnings of which  
8           inures to the benefit of any member, founder,  
9           contributor, or individual.

10          (4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
11          the Secretary of Commerce.

12          (5) STATE.—The term “State” means each  
13          State, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth  
14          of Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, the United  
15          States Virgin Islands, and federally recognized In-  
16          dian tribes.

17          (i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There  
18          are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section  
19          \$40,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2008 through 2012.

20          (j) NO REGULATORY AUTHORITY.—Nothing in this  
21          Act shall be construed as giving any public or private enti-  
22          ty established or affected by this Act any regulatory juris-  
23          diction or oversight authority over providers of broadband  
24          service or information technology.

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